AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims, including all prior versions, with the listing of claims below.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ A method for monitoring and controlling a number of available decentralized IP budgets of a subscriber in a packet-based communications network during an online assessment of charges for data transmissions, comprising:

allocating~~in which the~~ a plurality of available IP budgets ~~are each allocated~~ in a data-flow-specific manner to a data flow in a context that can be assigned to the subscriber~~,~~; ~~and~~

providing a higher-order control function ~~is provided~~ in a network node of the communications network, ~~said~~the control function charging the data-flow-specific IP budget according to a resource use of a data flow based on charge assessment specifications issued by a charge-assessing computer during a resource utilization of the data flow in a context that can be assigned to the subscriber~~,~~; and

effecting a partial or complete transmission of the IP budget between selected data flows on a case-by-case basis, whereby the control function effects a reallocation or transfer of the IP budget according to the specifications of the charge-assessing computer.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein when a data flow is added or removed, the charge assessing computer or the control function requests ~~the~~a return of ~~all~~ allocated IP budgets according to the charge assessment specifications of the charge-assessing computer and reallocates the IP budgets.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein

the charge assessing computer or the control function requests ~~the~~ a return of ~~all~~ allocated IP budgets at a point in time specified by the charge-assessing computer according to the charge assessment specifications of the charge-assessing computer, and reallocates the IP budgets.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein some or all of the data-flow-specific IP budget of a first data flow is ~~only~~ transferred by the control unit according to the charge assessment specifications of the charge assessing computer to a second data flow if a data-flow-specific IP budget allocated to the second data flow reaches a threshold value or is completely used up.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein some or all of the data-flow-specific IP budget of a first data flow is ~~only~~ transferred by the control unit to a second data flow if the second data flow belongs to a context that can be allocated to an IP address of ~~the~~a same subscriber.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein some or all of the data-flow-specific IP budget of the first data flow is ~~only~~ transferred by the control unit to a second data flow if the second data flow belongs to a context that can be allocated to ~~the~~a same IP address of the subscriber.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein some or all of the data-flow-specific IP budget of a first data flow is ~~only~~ transferred by the control unit to a second data flow if the second data flow belongs to the same context as the first data flow.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims,characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the charge-assessing computer issues a transfer authorization, within the charge assessment specifications, between a first and a second data flow by marking the first and the second data flow with a common identifier.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein a data-flow-specific weighting factor is specified by the charge-assessing computer for charge assessment of a data flow.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 9, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein a data-flow-specific weighting factor is specified by the charge-assessing computer for charge assessment of a data flow by means of a table or pointer to a position in a table.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein a GPRS network is used as the packet-based communications network.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to Claim 11, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the control function is located in a GGSN.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~ claim 1, wherein the control function requests ~~the~~ a return of the IP budgets of all other data flows when a threshold value of a data-flow-specific IP budget of any data flow is reached, and transfers them to the charge assessing computer.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein part of a data-flow-specific IP budget of a data flow terminated by the subscriber is transferred by the control function to one or more existing or new data flows.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~Method~~ The method according to ~~one of the above claims, characterized in that~~claim 1, wherein when a new data flow is added by the control function according to the charge assessment specifications of the charge-assessing computer, at least part of the IP budget of at least one existing data flow is transferred to the new data flow.